FOIA file

Dear Jim,

4/7/76

If I'd written FOIA appeal on the envelope after our (I think) very good meeting yesterday maybe you'd have fainted or something.

So I didn't put it on the envelope.

I did not intend to mislead you in saying that for the first time ever the FBI had written and said it would search and comply. As you will see when the file reaches you and as I quote, this is the McCreight language.

Essentially my request is for what the FBI has given Epstein, who credits it on all possible occasions, in writing and in many appearances.

If the Department does not have the book it is "legend." There were two condensations in Readers Digest, March and April issues. There were two interviews in New York Magazine. He appeared on Good Morning America as I recall on 3/7. There have been other TV appearances, including the one in Washington that I caught. I've been told of others, of a three-part condensation in the Times of London prior to British publication, and there was a long piece by Cockburn and James Ridgeway in the Village Voice, which I do have. Or, the whole thing has had massive public attention - all of on view and side. The reported and re-reported initial investment in the project is $500,000.

I believe this can be relevant in the appeals order of which we spoke yesterday. District 75-1448, appeals No. 77-1831. Until Epstein was out we did not know that the FBI also has fed him, apparently not expecting the feeding hand to be bitten. I have not had a chance to discuss this with Jim. I did not know of the rejection until I was home last night.

It is, I believe, unreasonable to describe the information I requested as "personal," even as it relates to Epstein, which McCreight's rejection does not mention.

However, were this not the case, Nosenko's position is identical with that of all the countless many other involved in the JFK investigation and about whom so much information has been disclosed.

While he was a KGB agent, that and copious details of that are not secret. The FBI and the CIA learned them all, repeatedly. I summarize FBI and CIA reports about him and the story he told the FBI in a book published in 1975. He was a major source in Barron's KGB. Several long FBI reports and a number of detailed staff memoranda are readily available in the National Archives. Even the dispute within the CIA, a big deal in the Epstein book and appearances, has been public for about three years if you can believe that the appearance of former CIA Director McCone on the CBS TV Evening News is public.

There is no request for really personal information about Nosenko and I have no interest in any. While as is unfortunately always the case I wrote in haste I do not believe any such interpretation of my letter is justified. I do not ask for his new identity, for example, when Barron's book makes clear it was known to him about Nosenko and about other defectors.

If you require more time please let me know. I do not like being out in a position where my word appears not to be dependable. It is not only my representation to you. As I told you yesterday my first stop yesterday was at the offices of the TV net news from which I'd received the initial inquiry and request for information and assistance. I said that the FBI had informed me it was processing the request and I would make whatever I received available to these people. I believe that the FBI imposed upon me in its initial response when I compare it with McCreight's rejection. I therefore intend to ask Jim to file a complaint, if it is at all possible for him to do so, at the earliest possible time.

I'm sorry this follows so closely upon what - regard as a constructive meeting from which we may all benefit. I believe it was quite worthwhile. Sincerely, Harold Weisberg